

## For the Children

### GOING ERRANDS.

I started on an errand,  
And then that old Jack Frost  
He came so fiercely after me  
I really 'most got lost.  
He gave my face an ugly slap,  
And then he nipped my nose;  
He pinched my fingers cruelly,  
And then he pinched my toes.

He said: "You will be frozen,  
You'd better turn right back;  
I'll pinch you harder if you don't!"  
That mischievous old Jack!  
I said: "When I am sent from home  
With something I must do,  
Just try your very worst with me,  
I'll go in spite of you."  
—Pearls for the Little Ones.

### MERLE'S FIRST LESSON.

By Harriet Burch Wharton.

Merle had at last made up his princely mind to go to school. He had reached the great age of seven years without ever having to do anything that he very much objected to doing, for neither father nor mother, grandfather nor grandmother, uncle nor aunt opposed his wishes and going to school was not one of the desires of his heart.

He had gone the first day of the last year, after being paid in advance, by his mother, with candy enough to have made him too cross to live with for a week only that he was so used to eating whatever he liked that a few pounds of candy made very little difference with him, while his father hired him to go by giving him a new wheel. Merle started for school willingly enough, but came home in an hour, declaring the teacher "no good," and studying was "too slow a game" for him, whereupon his mother sighed and his grandmother gave him a quarter of a pie, upon the supposition that children ought always to be eating when not asleep.

Of course Merle did not go to school after that, for there was no one quite decided enough to insist that he should, so all through the year he stoned the cats, tore down birds' nests and raged through the house, making himself a terror to those who were not blinded by love to his faults.

But one September morning he startled the household by declaring that he should go to school and see what the teacher was like, for there was no fun playing alone, and he was tired of his own company. It happened that Miss Elizabeth was not at all like Miss Daisy of the year before. Of course she had heard of Merle and upon his abrupt arrival in the school room she began and ended her study of him in about five minutes. She saw the untrained goodness of his disposition and understood that his generous, impulsive nature needed help and guidance, and that he must, above all things, be kept busy. Wise Miss Elizabeth. She said at once:

"Master Merle, will you be kind enough to pass those papers for me?" At the next uneasy minute Miss Elizabeth was ready with—

"Master Merle, can you draw some lines on the board for me?"

At recess time, however, the irrepressible mischief that filled his plump body welled up and over, and Merle grabbed the hats from all of the small girls, threw them up into a tree and was rushing after those of the little boys to put in the same place. Miss Elizabeth was watching for this minute and in a second was at his side, saying very quietly:

"You would better get the hats for the girls, Merle."

Merle was not used to a tone of command, and so answered emphatically: "I won't!"

"Miss Elizabeth had very brown eyes that looked steadily into Merle's gray ones as she lifted him toward the tree.

"Up with you, my man," she said in her clear sweet voice. There was no trace of anger in her tone—indeed, there was the least bit of a smile on her red lips as she looked at the flushed defiant face of the lad. Now Merle delighted in climbing, and Miss Elizabeth's strong hand and stronger will controlled him, besides it was something new to be called "a man," so he gathered up the hats and threw them down with all the energy of his young arm, but Miss Elizabeth did not appear to notice that, nor the push he gave little Edna Hunt as he landed on the ground—almost on Miss Elizabeth's toes—who said cheerily:

"You are a fine climber, Merle. I want to tell you a story of a boy who climbed a great deal higher than that to help a poor little bird caught in a tree." Miss Elizabeth dropped upon the ground, encircled by a group of attentive listeners. She talked beyond the recess hour, knowing that Merle needed lessons in gentleness and truth, with this, his first lesson in obedience.

At home that night Merle volunteered the information, between great mouthfuls of meat and cake: "Miss Elizabeth is a dandy. She knows how to treat a man."

### SNOWBALL DOLLY.

One day when five-year-old Nettie Grey was invited out to tea with her mother she was told she could take any one of her dolls she pleased, if she would dress and get it ready herself.

Nettie was delighted and at once ran to her doll nursery to pick out a doll.

Two were lying in bed, in their night-gowns, one was sitting in an arm-chair, two more were on a sofa, one was in a coach, and black Dinah was by the toy cooking stove, just as if she were getting supper.

"Which one of you wants to go?" she asked; but the dolls never answered a word. "I suppose, Dorothy, it will have to be you, the way you are stretching out your arms, but, if I 'member right, you didn't behave the last time I took you. Got pudding all over your best dress, and when I scolded, you just laughed at me, like you always do, you bad girl." Just here she was interrupted by something jumping in her lap. Not a doll, oh, dear no? but a snow-white kitten?

"What do you want, Snowball?" she asked, stroking the pretty white fur.

"Mew"! answered pussy.

"Do you want to go out to tea with mamma and me?"